

***U.S. Department of Education***  
***2009 No Child Left Behind - Blue Ribbon Schools Program***

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Type of School: (Check all that apply) ☒ Elementary ☐ Middle ☐ High ☐ K-12 ☐ Other  
☐ Charter ☐ Title I ☐ Magnet ☐ Choice

Name of Principal: Ms. Carmen Fuentes

Official School Name: Calusa Elementary

School Mailing Address:  
9580 W. Calusa Club Dr.  
Miami, FL 33186-1816

County: Miami-Dade State School Code Number\*: 13-0671

Telephone: (305) 385-0589 Fax: (305) 383-3829

Web site/URL: [http://www.dadeschools.net/schools/schoolinformation/school\\_details.asp?id=0671](http://www.dadeschools.net/schools/schoolinformation/school_details.asp?id=0671) E-mail:  
[cbfuentes@dadeschools.net](mailto:cbfuentes@dadeschools.net)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Superintendent\*: Mr. Alberto Carvalho

District Name: Miami-Dade School District Tel: (305) 995-1000

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School Board President/Chairperson: Dr. Solomon C. Stinson

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

*\*Private Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

Original signed cover sheet only should be mailed by expedited mail or a courier mail service (such as USPS Express Mail, FedEx or UPS) to Aba Kumi, Director, NCLB-Blue Ribbon Schools Program, Office of Communications and Outreach, US Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Room 5E103, Washington, DC 20202-8173.

## PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

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The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made adequate yearly progress each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirement in the 2008-2009 school year. AYP must be certified by the state and all appeals resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take the course.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2003.
6. The nominated school has not received the No Child Left Behind – Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, or 2008.
7. The nominated school or district is not refusing OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
8. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
9. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
10. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

All data are the most recent year available.

**DISTRICT** (Questions 1-2 not applicable to private schools)

1. Number of schools in the district:
- |            |                     |
|------------|---------------------|
| 241        | Elementary schools  |
| 75         | Middle schools      |
| 0          | Junior high schools |
| 62         | High schools        |
| 14         | Other               |
| <b>392</b> | <b>TOTAL</b>        |

2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: 8594

Average State Per Pupil Expenditure: 8424

**SCHOOL** (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:

- ☒ Urban or large central city  
☐ Suburban school with characteristics typical of an urban area  
☐ Suburban  
☐ Small city or town in a rural area  
☐ Rural

4. 2 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.

4 If fewer than three years, how long was the previous principal at this school?

5. Number of students as of October 1 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school only:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total	Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	12	6	18	7			0
K	71	65	136	8			0
1	81	69	150	9			0
2	48	75	123	10			0
3	64	74	138	11			0
4	72	69	141	12			0
5	68	58	126	Other			0
6			0				
TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL							832

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:

0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
1 % Asian
6 % Black or African American
64 % Hispanic or Latino
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
23 % White
6 % Two or more races
<b>100 % Total</b>

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: 13 %

This rate is calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	63
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	41
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	104
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1.	802
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.130
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	12.968

8. Limited English proficient students in the school: 23 %

Total number limited English proficient 192

Number of languages represented: 8

Specify languages:

- Spanish
- French
- Chinese
- Mandarin
- Turkish
- Portuguese
- Arabic
- Italian

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 47 %

Total number students who qualify: 395

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-price school meals program, specify a more accurate estimate, tell why the school chose it, and explain how it arrived at this estimate.

10. Students receiving special education services: 9 %

Total Number of Students Served: 71

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

<u>4</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>7</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>33</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>28</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>2</u> Developmentally Delayed

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff	
	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>41</u>	<u>0</u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>12</u>	<u>1</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>6</u>	<u>0</u>
Support staff	<u>8</u>	<u>0</u>
Total number	<u>69</u>	<u>1</u>

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 20 :1

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. Only middle and high schools need to supply dropout rates. Briefly explain in the Notes section any attendance rates under 95%, teacher turnover rates over 12%, or student dropout rates over 5%.

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Daily student attendance	97%	97%	96%	96%	96%
Daily teacher attendance	96%	96%	95%	95%	96%
Teacher turnover rate	6%	19%	7%	9%	11%

Please provide all explanations below.

In 2006-2007 five teachers retired and two left to other schools causing the teacher turnover rate to increase.

14. For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools).

Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2008 are doing as of the Fall 2008.

Graduating class size	0	
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0	%
Enrolled in a community college	0	%
Enrolled in vocational training	0	%
Found employment	0	%
Military service	0	%
Other (travel, staying home, etc.)	0	%
Unknown	0	%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>%</b>

## PART III - SUMMARY

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Calusa Elementary School provides a pre-kindergarten to fifth grade program for students who live in the surrounding West Kendall neighborhood. The school opened its doors in 1981 and is one of the top performing schools in the county. Calusa has been rated an “A” school by the Florida Department of Education for the past seven years. In 2008, the School Board of Miami Dade County presented Calusa Elementary with a proclamation for being among the top four percent of all public elementary schools in the state of Florida.

The mission of Calusa Elementary is to provide all students with sensitivity, awareness, and an understanding of our cultural diversity. A meaningful learning environment will be provided to instill a feeling of mutual respect among teachers, students and parents. This process will develop students to their highest potential which is signified by the school motto: “A Step Ahead.”

Parental involvement is one of the biggest advantages Calusa enjoys. The Parent Teacher Association is an extremely active organization that is responsible for providing countless volunteer hours before, during, and after school. Teacher turnover is very low. Many faculty and staff members have worked at Calusa for 20 years or more. Thirty-eight percent of the faculty have Bachelor’s degrees, 62 percent have Master’s degrees or above. Seven teachers hold National Board Certification. These advantages directly contribute to the continued success of our school.

Calusa Elementary has the tradition of providing exceptional education by meeting the needs of all students with a challenging curriculum. Administrators conduct data chats with classroom teachers to continually analyze student performance data and monitor learning gains. Teachers use data to drive instruction and re-teach areas of weakness. Differentiated instruction contributes to the increase of student achievement in all academic areas.

A variety of special programs exist to meet the needs of Calusa students. Calusa offers a fulltime gifted program to students in first through fifth grade. Three Extended Foreign Language classes pursue an accelerated program of study that infuses Spanish language into the reading and language arts curriculum. During school hours, low performing students in grades two through five receive interventions utilizing Voyager Passport, Quick Reads, Ticket To Read and Reading Plus. In addition to the rigorous curriculum, Calusa offers several clubs for students: Student Government, Safety Patrols, Broadcast WEXL, Art, Music and Future Educators of America.

Calusa works very closely with the community to provide expanded experiences to students outside the academic realm. Each year Calusa participates in the United Way of Miami- Dade student campaign. Calusa has collected over fourteen thousand dollars for this great cause each year for the past five years. In 2008, Calusa met 1,248 percent of its goal becoming the Regional Center VI National Winner. As an extension of our belief in the importance of helping students make connections as they learn, and to build respect for the world around them, Calusa Elementary has also adopted a school, Santa Clara Elementary, located in a low income neighborhood to provide assistance to needy families. The Student Council of Calusa conducts a Food Drive for Thanksgiving and a Toy Drive for the winter holiday. This year, Calusa students collected enough canned food and turkeys to supply sixty families with Thanksgiving dinner. In addition, over 500 toys were collected and delivered for the students to enjoy during the winter holiday.

Calusa prides itself in establishing high expectations for both students and faculty. Working together, students, parents and staff, is what keeps Calusa always “A Step Ahead.”

## PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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### 1. **Assessment Results:**

Students in grades three through five are evaluated annually in March with the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT). The FCAT is a criterion referenced test which assesses student mastery of the Sunshine State Standards. FCAT achievement levels are based on a 1-5 scale. Students scoring a Level 1 or 2 are considered to be performing below grade level standards. A Level 3 score is considered meeting grade level standards, and a Level 4 or 5 is considered performing above grade level standards. Since 1999, school grades have been issued using FCAT results as the primary criteria for calculating school grades in accordance with the Florida Department of Education (FDOE) accountability program. Schools are graded on a scale from A to F. Calusa Elementary students consistently exceed district and state results. Therefore, Calusa has been recognized by the State of Florida as an “A” school for seven consecutive years. The FDOE provides all FCAT data on their website: <http://www.fldoe.org>.

An analysis of the FCAT data for the last five years indicates an average of 92 percent of students achieved high standards in Reading, 90 percent achieved high standards in Mathematics and 94 percent in Writing. Since 2007, when Science data became available, an average of 69 percent of students achieved high standards in Science. Furthermore, over the past five years (2004 to 2008), the data indicates a 12 percent increase from 84 to 96 percent of students meeting high standards in Reading and a 19 percent increase from 79 to 98 percent of students meeting high standards in Mathematics. In accordance with No Child Left Behind, all subgroups tested achieved Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) for the past five years.

Calusa Elementary FCAT results demonstrate that students consistently perform well above district and state averages on all standardized testing measures. Based upon 2008 FCAT results, 96 percent of students achieved high standards in Reading. The average state scores of students achieving high standards in Reading were 70 percent and the district scores were 65 percent. The 2008 FCAT Mathematics results for Calusa Elementary indicate 98 percent achieved high standards in Mathematics as compared to 69 percent for the State and 67 percent for the district.

Additionally, 73 percent of Calusa’s fifth grade students met high standards in Science in the 2008 FCAT administration as compared to 43 percent for the State and 49 percent for the District.

The writing portion of the FCAT, given only to fourth graders, requires demonstration of proficiency in expository and narrative writing. A six point rubric is utilized to score student responses which must include focus, organization, elaboration and conventions. Scores range from 0 to 6 (low to high) with 3.5 considered meeting standards. The results obtained from the 2008 FCAT Writing+ Test indicate that 93 percent of fourth grade students achieved high standards in writing with a combined mean score of 4.2.

Further desegregation of the FCAT data indicate that 74 percent of students tested in grades three through five made learning gains and demonstrated a one percent increase in reading. In addition, 83 percent of the lowest 25 percent in the school achieved adequate yearly progress in reading. In Mathematics, 64 percent of students tested made learning gains and students in grades three through five demonstrated a four proficient increase. Eighty four percent of the lowest 25 percent in the school achieved adequate yearly progress in Mathematics.

### 2. **Using Assessment Results:**

As soon as the FCAT data is available, the information is used to make decisions regarding every aspect of the school including future teacher assignments, grade level configuration, resources and how intervention and enrichment programs will be implemented to further student academic success. During the summer the leadership team meets and reviews all of the data. The data is disaggregated and a PowerPoint presentation is produced to represent school, district and state results. This PowerPoint is presented at the first faculty meeting



of the school year. The administration meets with each grade level to discuss results and trends noted in the FCAT reports.

The leadership team meets with the grade level and department chairs to develop a school-wide Instructional Focus Calendar that aligns with the Sunshine State Standards and includes annually assessed benchmarks for reading, mathematics, and science. In addition, a writing instructional focus calendar is developed to address the writing trends provided by the FCAT Writing assessment data. The implementation of the Instructional Focus Calendar is monitored and data chats are held with each teacher to review assessment results, examine student progress and implement strategies to provide differentiated instruction.

Calusa Elementary has implemented the Continuous Improvement Model (CIM) to monitor student achievement and the instructional program on an on-going basis. Frequent analysis of data is necessary when implementing the CIM: Plan, Do, Study, Act. Assessment results determine the framework for decisions made regarding the academic program. The Educational Excellence School Advisory Committee (EESAC), comprised of parents, teachers, students and community members, reviews the assessment results and assists the Leadership Team in writing the School Improvement Plan (SIP). The SIP strategies are developed and monitored to address student needs. Examples of these strategies are as follows:

- Student Performance Indicators (SPI) and Edusoft software are used to gather data, in order to provide differentiated instruction for all students including FCAT Level 1 and 2 students.
- Student progress is monitored through diagnostic, formative and summative assessments such as State and District assessments, school-site measurements, and teacher-developed evaluations.
- Offer enrichment activities during the Reading/Language Arts block in order to maintain and enhance student performance for achievement Levels 3 through 5 based on the 2008 FCAT Reading Test.
- Utilize computer-assisted programs such as Accelerated Reader (AR), FCAT Explorer, Riverdeep, Reading Plus and Ticket To Read to enrich and remediate students' reading skills and to monitor performance.
- Administer Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), monthly benchmark assessments and Reading Plus Assessments for progress monitoring to adjust instructional focus and student interventions.

### **3. Communicating Assessment Results:**

Calusa Elementary sets high standards for all students in order to achieve the School Improvement Plan goals each year. Feedback to all stakeholders is vital to the continued success of the school and reinforces the expectations set which directly impacts student achievement. Initially, the State of Florida sends individual student FCAT reports to the school which are distributed to all students that participated in the FCAT. The teachers receive their individual class results and review the information with their students prior to the end of the school year, if results are available. At the beginning of the new school year, teacher-student conferences are held to review FCAT results in order to set goals and expectations.

Parents are notified of school results through many different avenues. The school grade is placed on the school marquee for the community to see. The grade and overall results are communicated through the Opening of School flyer and the Calusa "Step Ahead" Newsletter. The Accountability Report and school grade information is posted on the school website, the main form of communication with the Calusa community. Furthermore, a congratulatory message is sent to all of the parents via the Connect-Ed (automated phone messaging service) system communicating all of the gains and achievements made by the students. Finally, the administration communicates the FCAT results to the Educational Excellence School Advisory Committee (EESAC) at the first meeting of the school year and to the parents during the Back-to-School-Night.

### **4. Sharing Success:**

Calusa prides itself on the rigorous curriculum provided to students and the successful outcome evident in its student achievement. Calusa teachers and administrators continuously communicate successes with all stakeholders including the community of surrounding schools which support the district as a whole.

Calusa Elementary is proud to be part of the South Regional Center of Miami Dade-County Public Schools. To support the team effort motto: "Let's work smarter not harder," administrators are afforded the opportunity to network during monthly regional administrators' meetings. Sharing best practices is an integral part of all principal/assistant principal meetings. To facilitate this, Professional Learning Communities (PLC's) are developed at the start of the school year. Administrators from different areas of the region are grouped together to discuss concerns, share successes, challenges and plan together to address opportunities for improvement. Administrators share school data and strategies used to address student needs. This process provides a wealth of information and resources to the schools in the South Regional Center. Strategies used at Calusa are shared not only during regional meetings, but with feeder pattern administrators and team leaders to improve instruction and maximize student learning.

In addition to PLC's for administrators, the regional center creates PLC's for selected teachers, curriculum leaders and facilitators for each school, to share best practices, receive training and review curriculum resources that improve reading, mathematics, science and writing instruction.

Calusa Elementary is represented by Miami Dade School Board Member, Ms. Ana Rivas Logan. Calusa will continue to communicate student/school accomplishments and successes to her office. Ms. Logan visits the school often and takes the opportunity to praise the school during School Board meetings, particularly whenever any new information is provided.

## PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

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### 1. Curriculum:

Calusa Elementary creates a structured, student centered learning environment which fosters meaningful educational experiences and develops the child as a whole. Calusa implements a core curriculum based on the Florida Sunshine State Standards (SSS) and researched based resources. Dedicated teachers provide a rigorous and high academic program which is the driving force behind Calusa's continuous ranking as a top performing school in the State of Florida. Teachers use the SSS as a framework, but integrate Bloom's Taxonomy, Webb's Levels of Cognitive Complexities and Creating Independence Through Student-Owned Strategies (CRISS) into their instructional program. To advance teaching and learning, innovative and appropriate strategies are utilized and are associated with frequent reviews and analysis of student achievement data.

Calusa students are constantly being challenged. Literacy is a core component of the instructional program. All students in kindergarten through grade five are provided with a 90 minute block of uninterrupted literacy instruction. This instructional time includes the necessary components of a balanced literacy program as outlined in the Comprehensive Reading Researched Based Plan (CRRP). The CRRP is a district developed document that explains the instructional framework that aligns curriculum, instruction, assessment, personnel, resources, and professional development to positively impact student achievement. The Houghton Mifflin, Legacy of Literacy, is used as the core comprehensive reading program with all students. Language Arts instruction includes writing instruction as well as reading, active learning, higher-order thinking skills and the integration of technology.

The focus of the mathematics program is on number sense, measurement, geometry, algebraic thinking and data analysis. Instruction encompasses a hands-on approach using manipulatives, concept-development strategies and motivational real-world mathematical applications. Teachers in kindergarten through grade five emphasize problem solving skills in whole groups, small groups and with individualized instruction. Calusa Elementary uses Scott Foresman-Addison Wesley Mathematics series as the core textbook for instruction of students in grades kindergarten through five.

Calusa Elementary's science program focuses on physical science and chemistry, earth and space science, life and environmental sciences and scientific thinking. Instruction incorporates a hands-on approach using equipment and materials, experimental lab investigations and real-world applications. The Scott Foresman Science series is the core textbook utilized in Kindergarten through fifth grade.

Calusa's social studies instructional program addresses all state and district requirements in social studies, including multicultural education and character education. Higher order thinking skills, research skills and technology literacy are an integral part of the social studies program. Students in Kindergarten through third grade develop an understanding of the world through the studies of families and communities. In fourth grade, students study Florida's history. In fifth grade, students learn about our nation's history. Many enrichment activities, including projects, community presentations and fieldtrips are regularly infused into the curriculum to extend learning beyond the classroom. The core social studies textbook used at Calusa is Harcourt Brace.

The visual and performing arts are an integral part of our well rounded curriculum. Instruction encourages students to develop their talents, creativity, and self expression while enhancing the academic curriculum. In addition to addressing the district and SSS, special area teacher support the core curriculum by incorporating writing and technology into their program. Students also enjoy participating in art, chorus and music club.

Calusa is fortunate to have an outstanding foreign language program. The teachers in this program are innovative, energetic and have the ability to bring the study of the Spanish language alive. The students participate in district poetry and essay writing contests. This year one of our students received second place in

the district wide Cervantes Hispanic Heritage essay writing contest sponsored by Nova Southeastern University. Projects created through the study of different Hispanic cultures are displayed in the Miami Dade County Youth Fair Exhibition. Students are actively engaged in an authentic, challenging and a multidisciplinary environment while developing an understanding and appreciation of cultures and traditions.

## **2a. (Elementary Schools) Reading:**

In accordance with the Miami-Dade County district strategic plan, Calusa Elementary implements the K-12 Comprehensive Research Based Reading Plan (CRRP). The CRRP aligns with Florida's Formula for Success: 6+4+ii=iii. 6 represents the "Big Five": (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension) to which Oral Language was added (as it relates to students increasing comprehension through orally explaining their thoughts and answers). 4 represents the assessments - screening (i.e. DIBELS), progress monitoring, diagnostic (i.e. Diagnostic Assessment of Reading DAR), with outcome measure being added (i.e. FCAT or DIBELS). ii represents initial instruction, explicit, systematic and differentiated small group instruction. iii represents immediate intensive intervention, the research based intervention used by the district (i.e. Voyager Passport).

During the 90 minutes of uninterrupted instruction, teachers address the following components daily: opening routine, teacher directed instruction, working with words, effective writing, and guided reading/differentiated instruction. Teachers strive to create a classroom environment which is conducive to teaching and learning. Reading and Language Arts classrooms are print rich and inviting to students. Classroom libraries and literacy centers are evident and equipped with student-friendly directions. In addition to the 90 minute block, struggling students receive two hours of tutoring weekly using the research based interventions such as Quick Reads, Reading Plus, Voyager Passport, and Ticket to Read. In order to provide enrichment and supplement the basal, teachers use a variety of resources to expose students to a wide variety of literature such as Weekly Reader, Time for Kids, Scholastic News, and National Geographic Explore.

In order to support the reading program at Calusa, the Accelerated Reader (AR) Program is implemented school wide to motivate student to read and build fluency and comprehension. In 2008, Calusa was the only school in the district to receive the Renaissance Learning Master Library Award for effectively implementing the AR Program. To promote reading, AR celebrations include lunch with the principal for top point earners at each grade level, Prize Patrol rewards for students achieving their reading goal at the end of every grading period, and the classes with the highest class average in each grade level are recognized on morning announcements and receive a reading star to display in their classroom.

## **3. Additional Curriculum Area:**

Calusa Elementary recognizes the importance of technology instruction in educating students in the 21st century. The academic program at Calusa not only prepares the students to meet high standards in standardized tests, but creates a wide variety of experiences that makes students better prepared for the challenges of the future workforce. All classroom teachers provide instruction that embeds the National Educational Technology Standards (NETS) for students. Students are instructed on how to appropriately access and use the technology available in the building. Each classroom is equipped with at least four student computer stations and one teacher computer work station. Resources available through the internet such as FCAT Explorer, Riverdeep, Brain Pop, Quarter Mile Math, Gizmo, are examples of website students' access daily at Calusa. In addition to every classroom having four computers, a computer lab, equipped with 32 computers, a SMART Board and network printer is utilized by teachers to enhance skills.

Teachers incorporate the use of technology in the classroom and in their home learning assignments. Students can access the schools website that provides a variety of links to resources such as the Student Portal on the Miami-Dade County website. Through the portal, students can view their textbooks online to review chapters and complete assignments. Second through fifth grade teachers utilize the Reading Plus Program for enrichment

and intervention on a weekly basis. Reading Plus is an individualized computer program that addresses all the elements of the Big 5 (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension). Students are given weekly goals and must log on at least 30 minutes, twice a week for fidelity of the program. Reading Plus has proven to be very successful at Calusa especially in second grade as evidenced by the SAT 10 scores.

#### **4. Instructional Methods:**

Calusa's mission is to provide the best possible educational experience for every student and extends services to develop each student to their fullest potential. Many different methods of instruction are utilized to enhance the curriculum and differentiate instruction, so that all student learning styles and needs are addressed. There are a variety of different educational programs at Calusa that provide services to the different subgroups of the school. In addition to the general education classes, the school has Special Education (SPED) classes for students with learning disabilities and special needs. The program includes resources classes for all grade levels and inclusion classes in the intermediate grade levels. Calusa also has a program for English Language Learners (ELL). The ELL classes provide a full Reading and Language Arts program to students who are less than independent in English. ELL lessons include listening comprehension, oral expression, pronunciation, reading and writing. The ELL program supports the skills and concepts presented in the regular English curriculum. Our ELL students are nurtured and closely monitored in order to make the transition into the mainstream classroom as fluid and successful as possible.

Calusa also has a very large gifted student population. Advanced academic classes are offered in first through fifth grade. At this time there is one fulltime gifted class in first grade and two fulltime gifted classes per grade level in second through fifth. Teachers use innovative and creative techniques and develop lesson that go above and beyond the scope and sequence of the curriculum to provide a challenging and enriched environment for gifted students. Higher order thinking skills and problem solving activities are evident in every classroom. For example, a group of third grade students are participating in the district wide competition "Odyssey of the Mind" which is a combination of technology, artistry, competition and cooperation. Students get experience in risk taking and research that enhances their talents and creativity. Students form teams in order to solve problems cooperatively and are awarded points for their solutions. This is just one of the many enrichment activities students participate in the gifted program.

In order to maximize learning, several different instructional models are implemented in Kindergarten through fifth grade. Cooperative learning is a priority in the primary grades. Teachers utilize multiple instructional strategies and create groups that are flexible for enrichment and intervention. In fourth and fifth grade, the departmentalization model is utilized to support the delivery of instruction for each subject area. The departmentalization model at Calusa consists of two Reading and Language Arts teachers per grade level and one Science and one Mathematics teacher. These teachers work collaboratively to integrate the concepts and themes of each subject.

Learning is not isolated to the classroom. Students participate in a variety of fieldtrips and community activities to make a connection between the real-world and the classroom experience. These experiences provide the background knowledge necessary to support the academic achievement of each student.

#### **5. Professional Development:**

Calusa Elementary has a site based professional development team which consists of the principal, assistant principal, reading coach and professional development (PD) liaison. Each team member is responsible for delivering and supporting professional development at Calusa to enhance student learning. The administrators play a critical role in allocating resources, establishing time, scheduling and providing access to professional development. Moreover, the principal and assistant principal attend PD meetings provided by the District and Regional centers to effectively monitor classroom instruction, ensure it is aligned with content standards and SIP strategies. The reading coach also attends professional development offered by the District using the Train-the-

Trainer model to assist teachers with the implementation of the CRRP. The reading coach provides one-on-one classroom demonstration lessons and critical mass training to target every teacher in the school or a specific grade level. The reading coach provides training to teachers in effective learning strategies for reading and writing, administration of assessments and interpretation of student data which directly impacts student learning. The PD liaison's role is to support administrators and teachers with the registration of PD courses that are available on and off the school site. The PD liaison keeps teachers informed and ensures they benefit from the multiple opportunities being offered for professional development.

Professional Development is ongoing at Calusa Elementary. Teachers complete a needs assessment survey annually to determine which academic areas/topics require attention and further training at the school site. In addition, the District offers numerous opportunities for teachers, staff and administrators to participate in PD. For example, two teacher work days are specifically designated for professional development. Teachers are encouraged to participate in an in-service which supports the SIP strategies and directly impacts student learning. Research indicates knowledgeable teachers contribute to student achievement. Therefore, Calusa Elementary teachers keep up with the latest educational trends and technology through professional development and effectively implement into daily instruction as evidenced by rising FCAT scores for the past five years.

#### **6. School Leadership:**

School Leadership is correlated with student achievement and the overall success of the school. The principal of Calusa Elementary is committed to working with all stakeholders, students, parents, teachers and staff to maximize student learning. The main priority of the principal is to maintain a safe and orderly environment that supports not only the academic programs, but creates a positive atmosphere which promotes a professional and nurturing learning community.

To advocate the mission and vision of the school, the principal communicates in an honest and genuine way with all stakeholders which promotes high morale and impacts the entire school community. The administrators of Calusa believe in an open-door policy and encourage staff, students and parents to communicate successes, concerns and any issues that arise. The principal is an effective administrator who represents the school in a positive manner, demonstrates exceptional interpersonal skills and deals with conflicts constructively. The principal promotes teamwork and responds efficiently to concerns and solves problems effectively.

The principal is dedicated to recruiting, hiring and retaining highly qualified staff, allocating resources and managing the organization and operation of the school to support student achievement. The principal plans effectively, uses problem solving techniques, and collects and analyzes data for the continuous improvement of the school.

## PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

### STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 3

Test: FCAT

Edition/Publication Year: 2003-2007

Publisher: Florida Department of Education

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
FCAT Level 3,4,5	95	97	99	90	74
FCAT Level 4 & 5	76	79	79	56	40
Number of students tested	138	121	135	179	155
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
FCAT Level 3,4,5	98	97	100	84	46
FCAT Level 4 & 5	70	73	72	46	31
Number of students tested	49	37	50	58	46
<b>2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): Hispanic</b>					
FCAT Level 3,4,5	97	97	99	89	67
FCAT Level 4 & 5	78	77	78	67	38
Number of students tested	87	87	91	109	91
<b>3. (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Subject: Reading  
Edition/Publication Year: 2003-2007

Grade: 3  
Publisher: Florida Department of Education

Test: FCAT

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
FCAT Level 3,4,5	91	93	97	80	79
FCAT Level 4 & 5	57	66	72	47	44
Number of students tested	138	121	135	179	155
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
FCAT Level 3,4,5	84	89	98	74	65
FCAT Level 4 & 5	43	59	58	41	32
Number of students tested	49	37	50	58	46
<b>2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): Hispanic</b>					
FCAT Level 3,4,5	89	91	96	80	73
FCAT Level 4 & 5	57	63	73	45	67
Number of students tested	87	87	91	109	91
<b>3. (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:



Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 4

Test: FCAT

Edition/Publication Year: 2003-2007

Publisher: Florida Department of Education

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
FCAT Level 3,4,5	93	92	93	84	81
FCAT Level 4 & 5	63	68	57	38	41
Number of students tested	122	145	146	144	162
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
FCAT Level 3,4,5	89	91	90	83	78
FCAT Level 4 & 5	60	63	59	29	30
Number of students tested	37	53	51	41	54
<b>2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): Hispanic</b>					
FCAT Level 3,4,5	92	93	93	83	80
FCAT Level 4 & 5	62	70	61	35	43
Number of students tested	84	96	87	88	95
<b>3. (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Subject: Reading  
Edition/Publication Year: 2003-2007

Grade: 4  
Publisher: Florida Department of Education

Test: FCAT

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
FCAT Level 3,4,5	91	90	89	83	87
FCAT Level 4 & 5	68	68	53	53	53
Number of students tested	122	145	146	144	161
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
FCAT Level 3,4,5	86	87	86	76	83
FCAT Level 4 & 5	57	56	47	39	36
Number of students tested	37	53	51	41	53
<b>2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): Hispanic</b>					
FCAT Level 3,4,5	89	93	87	77	86
FCAT Level 4 & 5	64	71	55	44	47
Number of students tested	84	96	87	88	95
<b>3. (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 5

Test: FCAT

Edition/Publication Year: 2003-2007

Publisher: Florida Department of Education

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
FCAT Level 3,4,5	91	84	66	75	60
FCAT Level 4 & 5	71	53	36	48	33
Number of students tested	138	149	128	160	150
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
FCAT Level 3,4,5	88	83	53	57	45
FCAT Level 4 & 5	62	43	24	39	20
Number of students tested	57	47	43	47	51
<b>2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): Hispanic</b>					
FCAT Level 3,4,5	92	87	59	74	57
FCAT Level 4 & 5	68	51	33	49	30
Number of students tested	92	92	79	92	86
<b>3. (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Subject: Reading  
Edition/Publication Year: 2003-2007

Grade: 5  
Publisher: Florida Department of Education

Test: FCAT

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
FCAT Level 3,4,5	90	94	90	87	67
FCAT Level 4 & 5	64	59	52	51	38
Number of students tested	138	151	128	160	151
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
FCAT Level 3,4,5	82	94	88	85	48
FCAT Level 4 & 5	51	48	32	44	27
Number of students tested	56	48	43	47	52
<b>2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): Hispanic</b>					
FCAT Level 3,4,5	90	94	85	86	61
FCAT Level 4 & 5	64	56	39	48	35
Number of students tested	92	94	79	92	87
<b>3. (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes: